CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 12 August 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Guillermo Enrique González (Argentina)

GE.99-65462 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 832nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As you are aware, our esteemed colleague and friend Ambassador Mark Moher of Canada will be leaving the Conference very shortly, having been called by his authorities to other important duties. Ambassador Moher arrived four years ago, at a crucial time, when the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty were entering their final stage, and he injected into our deliberations a remarkable blend of deep knowledge of the issues under negotiation, an ingredient of iron-clad logic and a special ability to build bridges between opposing views. His personal contribution as "Friend of the Chair on on-site inspections" in the framework of the "Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban" testified to those abilities. His unflagging efforts to promote the start of negotiations on a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons culminated in his appointment last year as Chairman of the Committee established to that effect. His unwavering commitment to the Conference on Disarmament has been demonstrated in his many proposals aimed at forging a consensus on the programme of work of the Conference. I am sure that I speak on behalf of us all when I say that we will sincerely miss him. I wish you Ambassador Moher, and your family the success which you deserve and which you will, I am sure, continue to enjoy in this further stage in your career.

On my list of speakers for today are the representatives of Kenya, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Tunisia, Canada, New Zealand, Brazil, Cuba, Finland, Japan, South Africa, Bangladesh, Turkey, Slovenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite the representative of Kenya, Ambassador Kipkorir Aly Azad Rana to take the floor.

Mr. RANA (Kenya): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor briefly to air some comments about the expansion of the membership of this Conference. But first of all, I would like to convey my delegation's appreciation of the efforts you have been making in steering the Conference's work and finding a consensus on a work programme at this particularly difficult time.

I would also like to endorse the statement which was made at the last plenary session by the distinguished Ambassador of India on behalf of the G-21, welcoming the five newly admitted member States. Kenya joins other CD delegations in warmly welcoming Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia to our midst. Kenya already maintains close links with most of these countries, and in particular with some, under various auspices including continental and commercial groupings.

In the new seating configuration following this expansion, my delegation is now flanked on one side by Kazakhstan, and on the other, by Malaysia. We are therefore likely to be the first beneficiaries - or victims - of the radiation of the fresh energy which they will surely bring to this forum.

It is nevertheless regrettable that it took so long to adopt the decision to admit the five new members. My delegation persistently has been of the view that the Conference on Disarmament should be open to those States

(Mr. Rana, Kenya)

willing to join and participate in its activities. In this way, the Conference could rid itself of the image it has built, i.e. that of an exclusivist forum for pedantics, polemics and abstract exchanges.

On the question of further expansion, it has been argued in some quarters that increased numbers in membership will impact negatively on the work of the Conference such as by slowing down or impeding negotiations. Experience has however demonstrated that success or progress of the Conference's work in terms of either the conclusion of treaties or the adoption of decisions is conditional upon factors other than the mere numbers of membership. The most important of these is probably the political disposition of member States to demonstrate a sense of flexibility which is vital for arriving at a consensus, and the goodwill to substantively address all issues on the Conference's agenda, including the sensitive ones.

Right now, for example, the CD is still unable to agree on a programme of work for this year. We therefore remain stuck in a quagmire. Attempts to move out of it have so far not been successful. The CD thus runs the risk of closing the year on this rather low note.

In the view of my delegation, this state of affairs is not attributable to membership numbers. It is rather a result of the absence of the will on the part of some delegations to address all issues on the CD agenda in good faith. Indeed with a higher or lower number of members, the CD would still be stuck so long as the spirit of compromise and good will was lacking.

We hope therefore in this regard that those delegations which are still consulting on the currently contentious issues will hasten the process in order for the CD to get out of the present impasse.

Allow me, Mr. President, to join you in wishing Ambassador Moher of Canada farewell. We extend to him our best wishes and wish him success in all his future endeavours and like you, we will all miss his contributions, which have been very incisive and perceptive.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Kenya for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador, Ambassador Luis Gallegos-Chiriboga.

Mr. GALLEGOS-CHIRIBOGA (Ecuador) (translated from Spanish): When the United Nations was established in the aftermath of the Second World War, the disasters of war and a universal awareness of the historic importance of eradicating them led the founding States of the Organization to set among the highest priorities on its agenda the questions of disarmament and the reduction of the arms race. The countries which form part of the United Nations took on the same commitment when we signed the Charter of the Organization. Disarmament is not some rhetorical device or a mechanism which can be established without difficulties. We all know that nations acquire weapons and confront each other as a result of problems of a manifest complexity, the fruit of disputes a full understanding of which is frequently beyond even those involved themselves, or factors reflecting interests which

(Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga, Ecuador)

have deep historical roots. However, although there have always been disputes among human groups, seemingly they have existed since the origins of mankind, and common sense suggests that such conflict will continue among peoples in the future, it is no less true that following the shattering lessons in inhumanity we received in the First and Second World Wars, the community of Nations agreed on a reasonable principle: disputes should be settled solely by peaceful means and recourse to war is appropriate only in the extreme case of self-defence.

The history of mankind is in a certain way an account of how people manage to reach agreement on principles of general value following major disagreements and confrontations, only to observe that ahead of them lie similar or greater efforts to carry such principles into practice. The United Nations and its work in the sphere of disarmament illustrate very clearly this human dynamic. Following the signing of the Charter of San Francisco and following the signing of the Declaration of Human Rights - to recall another key document in international law - we found ourselves facing a long road ahead to crystallize their mandates. It is a long road, but like any long road one has to set out as early as possible and with plenty of energy if one wishes to get anywhere. The Conference on Disarmament is the instrument available to the international community to put into practice the principles of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. It is the vehicle which can enable us to pursue the path of non-violence, tolerance and the calming of spirits with greater distinction and vigour.

Ecuador wishes to express once again its appreciation to the Conference on Disarmament, which has unanimously decided to admit a new Latin American country to its ranks. In my statement on 24 June, I conveyed to all of you the principles which guide my country's position with respect to the matters currently before the Conference. With those guidelines, which Ecuador is pleased to find are similar to those of other fraternal countries, we plan to embark on the path to be followed by this Conference in the future, which we hope will lead us step by step to objectives of peace and fraternity, the reduction of tensions and the effective limitation of the means of war. The construction of a weapon-free world is not the result of chance. Violence is not dismantled without persistent work to do away with the arms build-up and warlike violence. Disarmament can only be the fruit of the conscious triumph of the human spirit and reason.

The work of the Conference, to which my country wishes to contribute in a determined and enthusiastic manner, has a special dimension if we view its purposes not merely as the key to a world free from violence but as a vehicle to provide security and development for millions of human beings. The doctrine of collective security has not lost its validity. The link between disarmament and development is an undeniable reality. The security of nations is not restricted to the important question of material security, which averts the destruction resulting from war and the disasters caused by weapons. Security also has a dimension which is expressed in development, and whose effects encompass all of mankind. In the view of Ecuador, the Conference on Disarmament must concentrate on its technical and specialized activities, but

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without losing sight of the ultimate scope of its efforts. In other words, the stalemate in the work of the Conference on Disarmament ultimately affects the collective security objectives and the development of States.

Within the Conference, Ecuador will coordinate its positions first of all through the Group of 21. Yesterday, my country was admitted to that group. We are honoured to participate in a group with which we have common positions and with whose members we have a lengthy history of diplomatic relations. This commits us to contributing to the activities of this Conference through the Group of 21, which of course does not rule out an openness of spirit on the part of Ecuador and a will to work with the other groups and countries in the CD. Ecuador looks to all of you members of the CD as partners in shouldering the great responsibility of addressing issues on which the welfare of future generations, our peoples and our families, will to a large extent depend. In this respect I would like to reiterate to the Conference Ecuador's appreciation for the unanimous decision to admit my country and four other countries to the Forum. We view that decision as reflecting the commitment by the Conference to the principles of representativeness and participation by States in international matters of concern to them. Representativeness and participation are basic to the construction of a democratic international system. Ecuador attaches special importance to those parameters, which do not contradict, but rather are vital to, the genuine realization of the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness in the work of international institutions.

Numbers are not necessarily a sign of greater or lesser effectiveness. There are international bodies with a small membership which have had a long history of inefficiency. It is true that effectiveness is founded on efficient procedures, but no procedure will be sufficient without, above all, the political will to foster the work of an organization. In this respect, the maxim concerning the United Nations, to the effect that it is and does only what its members permit, applies perfectly to the Conference on Disarmament. The successes and limitations of the Conference on Disarmament are ultimately attributable to the States which constitute it. Success in which the agenda of the Conference is applied effectively, which excludes no topic and which gives priority to matters of utmost international import will be a success attributable to all those of us who are members of this Forum.

Ecuador views its admission to the Conference on Disarmament as in a sense the culmination of its steadfast policy with respect to disarmament, expressed in the United Nations General Assembly as well as in the regional framework and the bilateral sphere. My country is very proud to be a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which ushered in a new way of seeing and operating in nuclear disarmament in the world. In turn, it has close links with the Non-Aligned Movement, of which it has been a member for more than 20 years, and which emerged on the international scene as a reaction to the politico-ideological confrontation which characterized the cold war. These examples of Ecuador's international commitment to peace and security, to global disarmament, also find expression in Ecuador's foreign policy with respect to its own special problems. Last year Ecuador and the Republic of Peru signed a set of agreements which brought a peaceful and negotiated end to

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a dispute which stemmed from the nineteenth century and which on various occasions had resulted in armed confrontation between two brother peoples. The determination of the people and Government of Ecuador was decisively displayed in support of a final solution to the dispute and the ushering in of a new stage of relations between the two countries. The Government of Ecuador thereby gave clear proof of its faith in the virtues of peaceful solutions, and in the construction of a climate of international collective security based not on military non-confrontation but on dialogue and cooperation between States.

Ecuador aspires to working with the other members of the Conference on Disarmament to promote the goals which bring us to this Forum. They will always find in my country a member with a constructive spirit, a pragmatic enthusiasm and a determination to rule out no path which can lead to a world which is safer, more fairly developed and more tolerant and fraternal.

On behalf of my delegation I would like to thank those who made Ecuador's entry to the Conference on Disarmament possible. Many who worked in a constructive spirit and displayed gestures of friendship which I will remember enabled the process to reach a successful conclusion. I would reiterate what was said by my delegation in this room last week and place on record my appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of the four countries joining with Ecuador, the Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament, and all of you. Most particularly, I would like to place on record my gratitude to you, Mr. President, and to express my admiration for your professionalism and devotion to the cause of peace. I feel very honoured to be the first Ambassador of Ecuador to occupy the post in this room and to bear witness before you that the people and Government of the Republic of Ecuador are confident that the mechanisms for peaceful negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament will banish the use of the instruments of destruction and death.

Before concluding, I would like to endorse your words concerning Ambassador Moher and to wish him success in his personal and professional life.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Ecuador for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nurlan Onzhanov.

Mr. ONZHANOV (Kazakhstan) (translated from Russian): At the outset I would like to express sincere gratitude for the decision to admit Kazakhstan to full membership of the Conference on Disarmament, which we interpret as recognition of the active efforts our country has made in the field of disarmament and the strengthening of peace and security. I would like to express particular gratitude to the present President of the Conference, Mr. González, for his personal contribution to moving forward the issue of the expansion of the membership of the CD and its positive outcome, and also to thank other delegations for their support.

Kazakhstan demonstrated its dedication to the cause of freeing the world from nuclear weapons when it acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

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Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State in December 1993. After the removal of the last nuclear warheads from its territory in April 1995 and the destruction of the remaining nuclear installation at the Semipalatinsk test site on 31 May 1995, Kazakhstan became the second State after South Africa to have voluntarily renounced the possession of nuclear weapons. In the light of the need for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime in every possible way, Kazakhstan signed the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. Our country has been making a practical contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of monitoring of compliance with the provisions of the CTBT. Work has begun on re-equipping seismic stations in Kazakhstan capable of locating underground events thousands of kilometres away as part of the global monitoring network. The former Semipalatinsk test site is a unique facility, where work is now under way to use its infrastructure to develop methods for monitoring nuclear explosions and to prepare equipment in the context of the CTBT Organization's programme of explosions for calibration purposes being carried out on the test site.

I would like to point out that currently an essential feature of the mechanism for strengthening global security is its multilateral nature, that is, focused, agreed and multilateral efforts, the path of cooperation, the search for common approaches and mutually acceptable solutions. The activities of the CD as a unique multilateral negotiating forum on vital issues make it possible to adopt effective measures relating to the non-proliferation and prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, global disarmament and preventing the arms race.

Kazakhstan is in favour of steady step-by-step nuclear disarmament through the fulfilment of commitments by all States members of the NPT, both nuclear and non-nuclear. The first step on this path should be controlling the production of fissile material. The considerable stockpiles of enriched uranium and plutonium worldwide, and also the large amounts of fissile material derived from the destruction of warheads, are a threat from the standpoint of non-proliferation. Therefore, Kazakhstan is in favour of beginning negotiations in the CD on the conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for military purposes.

Non-nuclear States are justified in raising the issue of security assurances and have the right to expect firm legal security assurances. In this connection, Kazakhstan fully shares the view that security assurances should have the legally binding force of an international instrument. One possible means of resolving this issue might be the adoption of a protocol on security assurances which would be an integral part of the treaty itself.

Transparency in armaments is essential in order to prevent the destabilizing accumulation of weapons in any region or the flooding of arms into any State. In this context Kazakhstan is in favour of limiting the international arms trade since this problem is becoming increasingly acute. While not a prime cause of conflicts, arms deliveries do feed them. This can be seen in almost all the regional conflicts in the world today. We believe

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that the main task here should be the creation of an international mechanism to help resolve this problem. Such a mechanism might be based on the Register of Conventional Arms, which includes data submitted by States parties on their arms exports and imports, national production and policies in this field.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that Kazakhstan will be making every effort to ensure the effective work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Kazakhstan for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Mr. Ahmed Jazri Mohammed Johar.

Mr. JAZRI (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, please accept our further heartfelt congratulations that under your presidency, decision CD/1588 was adopted, thus enabling our delegation's membership. My Ambassador, who is away to participate in a meeting in Beirut, conveys his heartfelt appreciation and best wishes to you and to all members of the Conference. My delegation would also like to join you in bidding His Excellency Ambassador Mark Moher farewell and extending best wishes in his next assignment.

Like almost all delegations, my delegation was caught by a most pleasant surprise at last week's plenary. We therefore wish to take the opportunity today to formally place on record my delegation's appreciation to all members of the Conference for having finally managed to adopt its decision on expansion admitting five new members, including Malaysia. We also pledge our fullest cooperation to you, Mr. President, and to this Conference in its work to achieve the common goals of the Conference on Disarmament. We stress the importance that Malaysia attaches to the continued role and relevance of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament which every effort should be made to preserve, strengthen and promote. My delegation pledges its fullest effort to help regain the credibility of this Conference to meet the expectations of the international community and to make this world a more peaceful and safer place for mankind today and for the generations to come.

The admission of these five new members is one step forward in addressing the issue of the expansion of the Conference. We still have 21 States that have submitted their requests for membership. As sovereign States these requests and all future requests should not be left in a state of uncertainty, but should be duly respected and given due consideration. They deserve attention and a formal reply by the Conference. Paragraph 2 of the rules of procedure of the Conference states that "The membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals". There is no clarity with regard to the process and procedure in this rule and its ambiguity should be addressed and rectified.

My delegation can still recall the difficulties of including in the Conference's annual programme of work a decision to appoint a Special Coordinator on expansion. Last year's Special Coordinator, His Excellency Ambassador Erwin Hofer of Switzerland, took up the challenge and has proven

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that despite the apparent lack of interest on the part of some members to address the issue of its expansion, he was able, with his skills and ability to convince the Conference and thereby this interim mini-expansion has been achieved. It was not without difficulty but with a lot of dedication and hard work. I wish to draw attention to Ambassador Hofer's report, as contained in CD/PV.807, that the Conference should address the unfinished business of expansion. My delegation wishes to express its support for further expansion of the Conference.

My delegation would also have wished to have joined the Conference at a time when the Conference had a clear direction. We would further request that the Conference find a solution to its present state of impasse. Consultations should be undertaken during the interim period to ensure that no time is wasted on procedural matters at next year's session. The Conference should also learn from the disadvantaged state that the Conference finds itself in as a result of procedural difficulties to exercise true flexibility and not mere words with no meaning. The Conference on Disarmament had a purpose and objective for its establishment and should not allow itself to fail. All members, especially the nuclear-weapon States, have an obligation to live up to the cause of this Conference.

An important body like this one should take advantage of and into consideration the resources, experience and ideas of its members and the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly which represent the international community. It might also take into consideration the views that are being expressed by the various interested organizations. No efforts should be spared and no time should be wasted. The Conference is, I am sure, as eager as my delegation is to get to work on the real business of the Conference.

It is disheartening to see the Conference fail to embark on real work since the negotiations on the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. In fact the Conference should by now admit that there is little prospect of any substantive work for this year given that we have only four weeks left in this third part of the 1999 session. It is clear that the CD faces this difficulty as a direct result of its procedural setbacks, and the Conference should seriously give some attention to resolving this.

It is important to overcome whatever negative impact the impasse over the last two years or three years (if we count this year) might have had on the CD. It is important first of all for the Conference to address certain aspects of its work methods, decision-making process and institutional arrangements which might have affected its efficacy, and to find for itself a clear road map and a reliable compass to help steer the multilateral negotiating process forward in the post-cold-war era. It will have to have a sense of urgency and a commitment to achieving tangible results. It will have to improve its decision-making methods and strengthen its essential consensus-building approach. My delegation is confident that the members of the CD will find collective wisdom and creativity in fine-tuning the work methods of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia, Ambassador Kamel Morjane.

Mr. MORJANE (Tunisia) (translated from French): Mr. President, since obviously I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Tunisian delegation, to congratulate you on taking the Chair and wish you every success in your efforts at this decisive phase of the annual session of the Conference. My congratulations also go to Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, and his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, for their willingness to assist and the impetus which they have always managed to give to the work of the Conference.

I would like to express my country's pride and deep satisfaction at becoming a full member of the Conference. My country's satisfaction following its admission is in keeping with the very lengthy wait it has endured since it knocked on the Conference's door in 1982. In this connection my delegation would like to thank most warmly and express its gratitude to all the member countries which decided to admit the group of five to this body. At the same time I would like to single out Ambassador Hofer for the tireless and commendable efforts he made as Special Coordinator on the question of the expansion of the Conference, which made it possible to enhance its universality with the admission of this new group.

Tunisia would have liked all countries that have applied to join the Conference to be admitted, irrespective of the date of their applications. Having cooperated and coordinated its efforts with them over a long period in the context of the informal consultations on the expansion issue, Tunisia, now a full member of the Conference, will continue to work to meet their legitimate demands.

Since its accession to independence and in particular since the change of 1987 under the leadership of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia has been devoting the bulk of its budgetary resources to human development, keeping to a minimum allocations to its military capabilities to guarantee its defence. In addition my country, like other peace-loving countries, has always felt serious concern at the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction around the world. It also deplores the fact that many developing countries have been allocating substantial resources to increasing their military capacity to the detriment of their economic and social development. With this kind of concern in mind it is obvious that my country has an interest in global disarmament and the negotiating process aimed at achieving it. Through its application to join the Conference on Disarmament Tunisia is not trying to derive prestige but to make a modest contribution to strengthening international peace and security, the objectives of the Conference.

With the increase in the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, some member States have expressed concern with respect to both the efficient functioning of the Conference and the effective participation of its members in its work. While we understand these concerns, my delegation would like to

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emphasize that such considerations, however realistic they may be, should not be to the prejudice of potential candidates for joining the Conference in the future. What is at stake is the credibility of the multilateral system, based on the principles of democracy and equality between States. Nevertheless, we share the view that in future appropriate rules should be set regulating the frequency of and arrangements for admission to the Conference in order to avoid any obstacles to the proper functioning of the Conference. At all events, and beyond all such considerations, it is undeniable that strengthening universality is an essential factor for increasing the influence of the Conference and enhancing its impact on international public opinion. This should be borne in mind by its members.

While reiterating our pledge of full cooperation with you, Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the four other new members who have joined the Conference together with us, and before concluding, allow me to convey greetings to Ambassador Moher and wish him every success in his future duties

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Tunisia for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Mark Moher.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Mr. President, it is of course a very great pleasure for me to address the plenary under the presidency of Argentina, and especially with you, a good friend and colleague, in the Chair. Certainly one of the most positive features of my stay in Geneva has been the friendship and cooperation between Canada and Argentina and between our two teams, and I appreciate that. I also want to thank you for the very kind words you expressed at the beginning of this plenary. I particularly welcome the reference to iron-clad logic rather than to iron-bound views, and I hope that my comments here today will not reinforce the latter comment or perception. I want also to thank all of those in the CD who in recent days and weeks have expressed over-generous assessments of me and of my efforts to contribute to this Conference.

Today is my final opportunity to address the plenary in order to share some perceptions, to bid farewell and to extend my sincere best wishes to all for the future. First I would like to start out with perceptions.

My time in the CD has been both highly rewarding and intensely frustrating. During my first 18 months the major challenge was to conclude negotiation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and to secure its successful launch through processes in New York and in Geneva. The reward, clearly, was to see the CTBTO established in Vienna under the capable leadership of our former colleague Wolfgang Hoffman of Germany. It is obviously my strong hope that steps will be vigorously pursued in capitals and in the first Article XIV (2) Conference later this year to secure the earliest possible entry into force of that Treaty.

Negotiation of the CTBT, with both its strengths and weaknesses, following closely upon the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as

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well as the 1995 agreement to initiate negotiation of a fissile materials cut-off treaty, was indeed a high point for the CD. It provided tangible evidence of what this body can achieve when circumstances allow, but even more so when the requisite political will exists. That perception is worth emphasizing - we should always bear in mind that political will can influence circumstances; we should never let circumstances dictate our fate! If we want to act, we can. Refusal, however articulated, to move forward on the basis of "slippery slope" fears or alleged "national security" grounds needs to be forcefully challenged. And definitely in a forum where each of us controls consensus!

This is what seems to be happening now - an inability to proceed with further substantive work due to a lack of will or, perhaps, to calculations that sincere efforts to advance disarmament should be hostage to events elsewhere. This is the frustrating aspect of my assignment here. It is that frustration, shared widely I am sure, that should lead us to recall and reaffirm the premises upon which and for which the CD exists. We should never give in to that frustration; surrender to failure should not be an option. I have never, for example, agreed with those who assert that our current stalemate is a confession of irrelevance by - or of the growing inutility of - the CD. But that situation, with its associated frustration, is a dramatic challenge to us all.

How to confront that challenge? From my perspective the basic premise upon which the CD is established is the conviction that measures to promote and achieve non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament are vital dimensions of a complex and comprehensive effort to enhance international security between sovereign States and to secure human security for all. They are not abstract - or even worse, naive - ends in themselves but critical elements as we strive to attain those security objectives. Neither international security between States nor human security can ever be secured by the overwhelming superiority of arms in the hands of some or by the unending acquisition of ever more exotic capabilities and/or of excessive quantities of weapons. Thucydides wrote many centuries ago: "They that have odds of power exact as much as they can, and the weak yield to such conditions as they can get." This is not a formula for true security, and especially not now as we enter a new millennium in which rapid and widespread advances in technology make us all increasingly vulnerable. Security for one and all remains a common goal demanding shared efforts. "Co-responsibility, cooperation and co-action" should be our mantra in the CD.

And there are positive actions we can take. Over the past four years the CD has shown considerable courtesy as Canada has set out its detailed reflections in that respect. There is no need to review that ground again today. But as I reflected in recent days upon our current stalemate a series of questions has emerged in my mind.

First, nuclear disarmament. Is nuclear disarmament not still a global priority in which all members of the international community have abiding interests? How can that global priority and those abiding interests of all be reflected in a positive, constructive and realistic way? Is substantive

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discussion in the CD not one such way? Certainly denial of dialogue or mere talks-about-talks cannot suffice. Nor can manipulated diversions into make-work activities. What legitimate reservations exist against such discussion, and can they not be validly addressed? I recently had the opportunity at a Monterey Institute seminar in Divonne to review this ground with a number of CD members. I continue to believe sincerely that these questions can and should be positively addressed.

Second, fissile material production. Why has it been so difficult to begin work on this issue on the basis of the framework and mandate agreed four years ago? Does the negotiation process of the CD not provide us all with appropriate and sufficient means to protect our interests and to address our various concerns? Can widespread contextual considerations not be productively dealt with through a broader action programme carried out by the States concerned? Again my answers to these questions are affirmative; our intervention in March expanded on that perspective.

Third, non-weaponization of outer space. Does the prospective - and indeed increasingly likely - weaponization of outer space not affect the vulnerability of, and thus the security of, all States? Is our understanding that no country's current policies favour the weaponization (as contrasted to the military use) of outer space correct? If so, should we not enhance security for all by acting now to preclude such developments rather than waiting for political-military-technological-industrial constituencies with vested interests to emerge? Can we not move forward with focused negotiations to that end? There is no question but that vested interests are beginning to emerge; certainly more and more resources are being allocated to develop capabilities. We should not be satisfied with the soothing argument that our alarms are overstated since a classical "arms race" will not take place. The reality is that any State which considers its security at risk will inevitably respond in some fashion, quite likely setting back disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation efforts in other fields - and evoking and provoking even greater security concerns. Again, we can and should act.

And finally, conventional or small arms. Is there not a growing recognition of the security challenges and human suffering caused by small arms? Are actions not being taken at both the global and regional levels to respond to that recognition? Should not the CD also respond? The CD can also make a strategic contribution to global and regional efforts in this field. I hope new ideas and new initiatives to that end will come forward.

Now I apologize for having yet again addressed this august body through a series of questions! It is a failing of mine for which I have been frequently criticized. But it is a useful way to focus one's thinking. Essentially all of these questions converge into two basic challenges: what needs to be done by the CD to enhance international and human security? And how can we proceed to achieve that objective? These two basic challenges can be successfully overcome. And in doing so, we should avoid one more challenge, that is, why we should not address an issue. It is always possible to find excuses not to act. Certainly the argument that one should not proceed in a specific area because such action might preclude options in the

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

future should be forcefully rejected. If such an approach were ever to be adopted as a rule, would we ever have had any of our key agreements - the BTWC, the CWC, the CTBT? And would 182 non-nuclear-weapon States have adhered to the NPT itself, now extended indefinitely, thereby pledging indefinitely not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons? Canada has posed all of these questions to itself; our answers are included in our views as to a valid and viable programme of work in this body. The CD can respond: first, it should be a forum for the sophisticated and sustained consideration of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues, viz. nuclear disarmament; and, second, it should negotiate constructive multilateral agreements responding to our priority security needs.

To do so is certainly not beyond the capabilities of this Conference - capabilities which should furthermore be liberated from the straitjacket of our outmoded group structures. As the global community becomes more complex and multifaceted, I am increasingly of the view that issue groups are a much more constructive approach to our agenda. Are not the vast majority of this Conference in favour of positive realistic action on nuclear disarmament? If so, why do we not organize and act accordingly? It is frankly bizarre for us to continue into the next millennium on the basis that our security interests in this forum are effectively captured in "Western", "Eastern" and "G-21" groups. Differences of substance, of strategies, of tactics will always exist - but we should definitely demolish old barriers between us which are reflective of a world which no longer exists. And we should welcome additional members of our global community who wish to contribute directly to our work; certainly the unduly delayed decision to welcome our five new members - Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia - is particularly welcome.

This theme of drawing effectively upon the capabilities of the CD brings me to the most essential, and demanding, part of this goodbye message. As I disengage I wish to pay a sincere tribute to what is in the final analysis the greatest strength of the CD - that is, the quality of its members. It has been a singular experience and honour to have worked with so many worthy colleagues - ambassadors and advisers - and to have had the opportunity to appreciate their ability to advocate so effectively their perspectives and positions on the many demanding issues we have collectively addressed. Steve Ledogar, Grigori Berdennikov, Mounir Zahran, Jacob Selebi and Sha Zukang - all of whom made distinctive and lasting contributions - have moved on but are not forgotten. Arundhati Ghose deserves special mention for her remarkable grace and strength under fire. My "co-continental" Antonio de Icaza merits the deepest respect and admiration for his outstanding contributions. And the intellectual rigour, eloquence and energy demonstrated so consistently by Munir Akram over the past four years have been truly exceptional. Many others, past and present, could be mentioned, including in particular all my colleagues in the Western Group, with whom I and the Canadian team have worked so closely. I wish to emphasize it has been a great honour and pleasure to have worked with you all.

I also wish to express a special thank-you to our Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and to his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, as well as

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

to all members of our highly professional and impartial secretariat for their advice, their cooperation, and their support. Canada perhaps had a more thorough opportunity than many others to benefit therefrom during the lengthy CTBT process. Our appreciation is all the more sincere for that reason.

And, finally, it would be unconscionable of me not to acknowledge publicly in this plenary and on this occasion my deepest appreciation of the exceptional contributions made by my patient and forgiving Canadian partners. All of them - beginning with Don Sinclair and continuing with Avard Bishop, Mark Glauser and Marc Vidricaire - have consistently demonstrated the highest professional and personal qualities. My wholehearted respect and gratitude goes to them all.

And so my four years in this Conference come to an end. It has been a great honour for me to represent my country in this important institution. I have enjoyed immensely the professional challenges of "this graduate school of multilateral diplomacy". The exceptional personal relationships I have experienced have been equally rewarding. In finally closing I slightly paraphrase Otto von Bismarck, who stated: "The (diplomat's) task is to hear God's footsteps marching through history, and to try to catch on to His coat-tails as He marches past." May this Conference hear the footsteps - and catch on to the coat-tails! I wish this institution and you all individually the very best for the future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Canada for his important statement. I am convinced that your words today will continue to assist this Conference to give thought to our work and that your words will be with us much longer than your physical presence in this room. But we will always remember you with great affection and much respect. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Clive Pearson.

Mr. PEARSON (New Zealand): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor during your presidency, let me convey New Zealand's warm congratulations on your assuming the Chair. May I also convey my warm best wishes to Ambassador Moher and to his family for their future?

Mr. President, we support wholeheartedly your continuing efforts to reach a consensus on the programme of work. And we still hope this might prove possible this year, along with an understanding that it would also take us forward in 2000. While we appreciate, too, the desire to have a comprehensive programme, we are deeply disappointed that valuable time has been lost again this year: time that could have been spent productively on fissile materials negotiations.

New Zealand does not consider, as some are claiming, that the CD is in crisis over the failure to engage. But we may reach that point if there is continuing inaction beyond this year. It might be convenient for those who observe our activities to lay the blame for this situation at the feet of the institution itself. That would be illusory. The responsibility rests squarely with the members of this Conference.

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

In this context, we do not support the call made recently by participants in the Tokyo Forum to "suspend" our operations until we can carry out purposeful work. To do so would be self-defeating and counter-productive.

New Zealand is committed to the legitimate role of this Conference as the multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. And we do not dispute that it must negotiate by consensus. But the need to take a serious look at our working procedures is overdue and now compelling. And it may be those shortcomings that determine ultimately the credibility of the Conference in the future and our ability to engage in work.

We are delighted it was possible to take a decision last week to expand our membership. New Zealand was pleased to support the Special Coordinator's proposal from the outset. We are looking forward to working with these five delegations. New Zealand considers that membership of this body should be universal, however. It makes little sense to us, in a body charged with disarmament negotiations and where it is implicit that these instruments should enjoy universal adherence, not to ensure the widest possible participation in that process. We believe also that there can only be one criterion applied to membership of the Conference, and that is simply a commitment to disarmament: no more, no less.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of New Zealand for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Celso Amorim.

Mr. AMORIM (Brazil): First of all, Mr. President, I want to join you in your farewell message to Ambassador Moher. His reflections today show to me, as a newcomer, what I have missed in the past and what all of us will be missing in the future.

I take the floor today to formally express the Brazilian Government's satisfaction at the decision which the Conference on Disarmament was able to adopt at its last session, under your able leadership, concerning the admission of five new members to its ranks, namely, Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia.

As a delegation committed to multilateralism in the field of disarmament and security issues, as well as in others, we welcome this decision as a very positive step, one which will contribute to making this forum more representative and more democratic and potentially more effective. We believe that the present international scenario can only benefit from an enhanced multilateral framework for the promotion of peace and security under the aegis of the United Nations, and in this context, a balanced enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament such as the one we have finally reached agreement on can be considered in itself an encouraging development.

(Mr. Amorim, Brazil)

We are convinced that the CD's five new members are particularly well placed to enrich our debates and impart new dynamism to our work with their firm commitment to peace within and beyond their regions, as well as with their strong engagement in the disarmament and international peace and security agenda of the United Nations.

As a Latin American, and in particular a South American, I wish to extend a fraternal greeting to the delegation of Ecuador, a country which presided over the General Assembly's First Committee a few years ago, a co-participant in the Tlatelolco Treaty regime, a nation which has recently set an historic example by peacefully settling a bilateral dispute within the strict observance of international law, thereby consolidating the pacific vocation of our region. Let me just say that I am particularly glad because when we had the last expansion of the CD, I had the opportunity to comment that there were only two Latin American members then being accepted and that our region was being penalized because it was peaceful. So it is being redressed now.

We share with all the new members a common historical perspective regarding the importance of raising the international level of awareness with respect to disarmament matters, and I believe it would be appropriate to underline that this remark applies very specifically to "nuclear disarmament".

Whether on a bilateral or plurilateral basis, we are pleased to be able to intensify our coordination with the five new CD members so as to advance towards the attainment of our shared objectives. We look forward to working closely with those among the five who now join the Group of 21. As a member of the "New agenda towards a nuclear-weapon-free world" coalition, we are proud to point out that with Ireland's admission to the CD, all members of this group are now full participants in the Conference.

Mr. President, I took the floor primarily to express these words of welcome to the new members. Nevertheless, like others, we feel distress at our incapacity to move forward in spite of the strenuous efforts of Presidents, including Ambassador Dembri and yourself, just to mention the last two. This inability is totally in contradiction to the professed aims of our countries and to the signal the peoples of the world are expecting from us on the eve of the millennium. We may be fortunate that public opinion at large, although very aware of the importance of disarmament subjects, particularly those linked to nuclear disarmament, does not focus sufficiently on the activity or inactivity of this body. Otherwise, it would soon start questioning if it is appropriate to dedicate human and material resources for no apparent result. However, I am not pessimistic. This is not the first time the CD is undergoing a stalemate in its deliberations, and even though its "crisis" - you may choose another name - has its own characteristics, I do think that we will be able to get out of this one as well. We call on members which are still reluctant to show flexibility to reflect on the facts of this paralysis for our long-term objectives. The best welcome we could offer the new members would be to have a programme of work in which they would be able to engage, as I am sure they are eager to do.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Carlos Amat Fores.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Allow me first of all, Mr. President, to express my appreciation to you and the distinguished ambassadors who occupied the Chair before you during this session of the Conference on Disarmament for the valuable and constructive efforts which you have made with a view to arriving at a programme of work and extracting this forum from its current impasse. I personally urge you to continue with your efforts, in which you may count upon the firm support of the Cuban delegation, which, like all the members of this Conference, hopes that it will be able to fulfil its functions and objectives and meet the expectations of the international community, which is calling upon us to make urgent efforts to maintain international peace and security.

I requested the floor this morning to address the question of expansion of the Conference on Disarmament and, in particular, decision CD/1588 which was adopted during the last plenary session and which permitted the entry of five new members, namely Ecuador, Malaysia, Tunisia, Kazakhstan and Ireland.

On behalf of the Government of Cuba, and speaking personally, I would like to congratulate the distinguished ambassadors or representatives of those five States and request them, through you, to convey to their respective Governments our welcome and our best wishes for being able to work in a joint and constructive manner in this important multilateral forum. Allow me also to express the hope that this recently adopted decision will constitute a spur to promote the work of the Conference on Disarmament and afford us a real opportunity to share with the five new members the arduous work which the international community expects of us in negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties with particular attention to the objective of achieving a world which is free of nuclear weapons.

I would like to add, in a concise manner, the hopes of my delegation with respect to the handling of the question of the expansion of membership in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. Cuba is prepared to accept and would welcome the appointment of a special coordinator on this issue, within the framework of a complete and balanced programme of work including the various existing priorities to be found on the international disarmament agenda. In our view, the mandate of such a special coordinator should not be confined to simply studying whether or not to increase the members of the Conference, but should also include a serious and thorough process of consultations and analysis making it possible to arrive at substantiated conclusions with respect to questions such as the present membership of the CD and whether the Conference really responds to the present requirements and scenarios with respect to international disarmament and security; whether the Conference is really characterized by equitable and representative geographical distribution between the various regional groups making it up, as well as internally within those groups; and provide for the possibility of exploring ways and means of conducting an objective appraisal of what might really constitute the optimum composition of the Conference, bearing in mind

(Mr. Amat Fores, Cuba)

its eminently negotiating role. Notable on this last point would be the necessary considerations among the criteria for access to membership of the CD and the need to ensure its effective functioning, issues on which my country is currently conducting a careful study.

Finally, allow me to reiterate words of welcome to the five States which have just become full members of the Conference on Disarmament and our willingness to establish close working and cooperative relations with all of them. Their presence in the Conference will undoubtedly be very positive and we are also sure that their analyses and thinking will contribute to enriching the debate and attaining the objectives of this multilateral negotiating forum.

I would like to endorse the words of appreciation and good wishes that other colleagues have spoken here by way of bidding farewell to Ambassador Moher of Canada. Ambassador Moher has undoubtedly left an important mark on the Conference on Disarmament and his deliberation and intelligence have more than once offered food for thought and a basis for positive steps forward. We wish the Ambassador and his family every happiness.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Finland, Ambassador Markku Reimaa.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): On behalf of the 15 member States of the European Union, I have the honour to bring to the attention of the Conference the following observations.

The member States of the European Union have participated in the consensus on a limited expansion, comprising five new members, following the recommendation made by the Special Coordinator for CD expansion, the distinguished Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, in his report last year. As the Special Coordinator set out in this report, the list of countries had been chosen by him in accordance with criteria relating to the date of application and to geographical distribution.

The European Union welcomes the decision of last week as a step forward in the ongoing process of CD expansion. We are looking forward to closely cooperating with the new members, Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia, to move the CD to substantive work.

However, the European Union notes that among the five new members of the CD, there is only one member State of the European Union. The decision taken last week therefore implies that, after decision CD/1406 of 17 June 1996, once again the declared objectives of the European Union have not been attained. I would like to recall that the European Union continues to pursue its efforts in support of the candidature to the CD of those European Union member States which are not yet members of the Conference. We would therefore like to state that such a limited expansion falls short of our expectations and runs counter to our well-known and traditional position.

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

In this respect, it is important to note that the CD does not organize its work on the basis of geographical groups in the sense that they exist, for instance, in specific United Nations forums. In this context, the EU does not consider geographical balance to be an essential criterion.

In accordance with rule 2 of the rules of procedure of the CD of June 1997, which stipulates that "the membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals", Finland would like to put on record on behalf of the member States of the European Union that the decision on a limited expansion adopted last week has been accepted by the EU States members of the CD as an intermediate step in the ongoing process of phased CD expansion to all candidates and with the explicit understanding that the CD remains actively seized of this matter. The European Union will therefore lend its full support to the early reappointment of a special coordinator on CD expansion. The European Union will itself continue to work actively with the special coordinator towards the achievement of its objectives in this context.

Before closing, let me wish Ambassador Moher and his family all the best and thank him for the excellent cooperation.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Finland for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Akira Hayashi.

Mr. HAYASHI (Japan): Mr. President, since this is the first time for me to take the floor under your presidency, please allow me to express my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I pledge the fullest cooperation and support of my delegation in the discharge of your important task. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria, for his earnest and tireless efforts in achieving agreement on the programme of work for this year.

I would like to join the previous speakers in very warmly welcoming the five new members to the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is looking forward to working together with these five new members. I would like also to extend my sincere best wishes to Ambassador Mark Moher, who will leave us very soon.

I have asked for the floor today in order to inform the CD members of the report of the Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which was issued on 27 July.

The Tokyo Forum was originally proposed by the then Prime Minister, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, and the then Foreign Minister and current Prime Minister, Mr. Keizo Obuchi, in August 1998, bearing in mind various challenges, both regional and global, which we face today in the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, especially the nuclear testing in South Asia.

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

The idea was to form a group in which eminent experts would study ways and means of countering the negative trends in nuclear non-proliferation and accelerating the nuclear disarmament process, and, based on that study, make concrete recommendations.

This undertaking was entrusted to two Japanese independent institutes, which have the expertise to conduct studies on disarmament, namely, the Japan Institute of International Affairs and the Hiroshima Peace Institute, to set up a body for that purpose. Their role and work as secretariat was supported by the Government of Japan.

More than 20 prominent experts from around the world participated in this exercise in their own personal capacities. Thus, the views expressed by the members do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Governments or organizations to which they belong.

They met four times and as a result produced this report at the last meeting which was held in Tokyo last month.

It should be noted that the members agreed to the main thrust of the report, but did not subscribe to every point in the report.

The report and recommendations are based on members' analysis of recent developments and their shared concern over the urgent need for concrete steps to be taken in order to stop the worrisome trends in regional and global security.

The report was submitted to Prime Minister Obuchi by the co-Chairmen of the Forum, former Ambassador Nobuo Matsunaga and former United Nations Under-Secretary-General Mr. Yasushi Akashi.

Even though the Government of Japan played only a limited role in supporting the organization of the meetings and the views expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect its position, our Government regards the report and the recommendations contained therein as significant contributions to the discussions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by the international community.

The Japanese Government, taking this report into consideration, intends to continue playing a key role in nuclear disarmament with a view to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

I would like to inform CD members that the report was also submitted by the co-Chairmen to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, on 4 August in New York. Accordingly, his spokesman issued a statement which expresses appreciation of the recommendations and the hope that the international community will study them with a view to reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons in the world.

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

The work of the Tokyo Forum has been concluded. The Japanese Government sincerely hopes that the Tokyo Forum report will be further considered and studied at various levels in the international community as a road map of how disarmament and non-proliferation issues can be pursued.

I have asked the Secretary-General of the CD, Mr. Petrovsky, to issue the text of the Tokyo Forum report as an official document of the CD. The full text of the report is also available on the home page of our mission (http://missions.itu.int/~japancd/).

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Japan for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa, Mr. Tom Markram.

Mr. MARKRAM (South Africa): I have requested the floor today to warmly welcome Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia as members of the Conference on Disarmament. South Africa has excellent relations with these countries and looks forward to working together with them in the CD in the pursuit of our common objectives.

My delegation would also like to extend its thanks and congratulations to Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, who, in his capacity as Special Coordinator on the issue of expansion, was able to identify and consolidate the elements of this agreement. The efforts of each of the successive Presidents during 1999 must also be recognized. Without their commitment this issue may well have fallen victim to the paralysis which has affected the rest of our work this year. You, Mr. President, and your predecessors are to be congratulated for your energy and commitment to seeing our five new colleagues enter the fold.

The decision to expand the membership of the Conference is of course one which my delegation has consistently supported. Since our own entry to this body along with 22 other countries in 1996, South Africa has made clear its commitment to the democratization of all multilateral forums, including the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation will continue to work for the further expansion of the membership of the Conference. It is my Government's stated policy that every country which wishes to make a contribution to our important work should have an opportunity to do so. South Africa does not believe that the size of the membership of the Conference will have any significant effect on its ability to deliver the agreements to which it is mandated. The key element in the delivery of agreement is political will and that is a commodity which all new members of the Conference who have joined since 1996 have displayed in abundance.

We should not attempt to obfuscate the real issue by artificially tying the further expansion of the Conference to the successful conclusion of specific issues, rather we should focus on the real obstacles faced by the Conference, solve those in a considered and rational manner, and get down to work on the negotiations we all agree are our priority.

(Mr. Markram, South Africa)

Before I conclude, I would like to join others in wishing Ambassador Moher well in his new assignment. Ambassador Moher's intellectual and substantive contribution to the work of the CD, as well as his friendship, will be sorely missed.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh, Ambassador Chowdhury.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): Mr. President, your conduct of the leadership of the Conference on Disarmament is to be applauded, and we do so with much pleasure. We are also in the debt of your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Dembri, for his endeavours. Like others, we are sorry to see Ambassador Mark Moher go and wish him and his wife Jean our very best for the future.

The primary reason I take the floor is to welcome our five new members: Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia. Given that Bangladesh has excellent bilateral relations with each of those countries, a fact that is reflected in the close cooperation between us and each of them in Geneva, it gives us satisfaction beyond measure. We congratulate them. Furthermore, we express the confidence that their participation will not only enrich our deliberations, but also help lead this sole negotiating forum on disarmament closer to its goals. Ambassador Hofer and you yourself deserve praise for your efforts.

For now, though, the attainment of our aim in the Conference on Disarmament appears to be a prospect somewhat remote. In fact, it grows dimmer by the day. It is sad that we have reached an impasse, and the Gordian knot is unlikely to be untied soon. Our pace of progress would hearten the snail. Inaction in the Conference on Disarmament can send inappropriate signals to the rest of the world. This is particularly so at a time of deteriorating situations in many parts of the globe. Obviously a thrust forward would be necessary. The proposed Foreign Ministers' meeting early next year could be an event that could act as a spur. As ample evidence has clearly attested, unless there are definitive demonstrations of nuclear disarmament, both in terms of genuine efforts and actual effect, the purposes of non-proliferation can be seriously impeded. The key States have the additional responsibility of leading the way so that others who are less militarily powerful do not feel a perceived need to buttress their sense of security by means that could be seriously destabilizing. This is an area where the old and wise adage "example is better than precept" is most apt. If nuclear disarmament is being negotiated elsewhere, it is indeed welcome; but unless this representative forum of the global community is closely associated with ongoing processes through the appropriate framework, the end to which those efforts are directed, a more secure world, would be ill-served. A moral behavioural corollary to the acquisition of superior military technology must be greater restraint. By moving forward the Conference on Disarmament can also assist in containing individual situations, so that regional flashpoints

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

or flare-ups do not transform into conflagrations with wider ramifications. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Government are unflinchingly committed to Bangladesh striving for a stable and peaceful South Asia.

However, it is obvious that like you, Mr. President, your immediate successors, a category which also includes me, have their work cut out for them, but in this Bangladesh's active cooperation will always be forthcoming.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, Ms. Say.

Ms. SAY (Turkey): Mr. President, since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, I would like to express, on behalf of my Ambassador and our delegation, our sincere congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Turkish delegation.

I have asked for the floor today to also welcome the five new members of the Conference. The decision that was taken during the last week's plenary has been keenly supported by our delegation. We are confident that the newly added five countries, with which Turkey enjoys excellent relations, would contribute effectively to the work of the Conference. Turkey is looking forward to working constructively with them. I also would like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland for his tireless efforts as Special Coordinator on the matter.

On this occasion, I would like to reiterate my country's position regarding the future expansion of the CD. In our view, two assumptions should be borne in mind. Firstly, the CD should remain a body whose function is to negotiate arms control and disarmament, where the rule of consensus should apply. Secondly, it should be of limited composition and reflect the various political, economic and geographical elements commonly accepted in the international system. Now, we think that the time is ripe for the CD as the single multinational forum on disarmament to meet the expectations of the international community with its new composition.

I also would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to the distinguished Ambassador Mark Moher on behalf of our delegation and my Ambassador, who unfortunately is not here today due to other engagements which prevented him from extending his best wishes to Ambassador Moher personally. We wish him and his family every happiness and success in the future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Turkey for her statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia, Ambassador Zore.

Mr. ZORE (Slovenia): Sir, let me first salute you as the President of the Conference on Disarmament and congratulate you upon your assumption of

(Mr. Zore, Slovenia)

this responsible function, while sincerely hoping that your experience and untiring energy will help you lead the Conference towards agreement on its programme of work, even at this late stage of this year's session.

Allow me also to express my satisfaction at the fact that the Conference last week decided to expand its membership by five countries. My delegation interprets this as a hopeful sign that the CD could be moving toward the universalization of its membership, thus allowing those countries that wish to do so to participate in its deliberations. My sincere congratulations to the esteemed representatives of Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia.

The main reason for my taking the floor today is a short announcement. Allow me to make it known to the members and observers of the CD that on 29 July of this year the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. This ratification is a clear manifestation of Slovenia's consistent policy of strengthening international arrangements and regimes for both the prevention of nuclear proliferation as well as the continuation of the process of nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Slovenia for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Naziri Asl.

Mr. NAZIRI ASL (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I would like to begin, on behalf of my delegation and my Ambassador, by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I should like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to your predecessor for his untiring efforts.

Last week we took the decision to admit five new members to the Conference on Disarmament. We warmly welcome Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia as full members of the Conference on Disarmament. We are ready to cooperate with the new members in the work ahead.

I took the floor to emphasize once again our position on the issue of expansion. As we have already addressed this issue, we understand the rationale of universality, but one should not lose sight of the fact that there is a close correlation between the expansion of the Conference and its efficiency. The Conference on Disarmament needs to be a negotiating body, and as such, it should be meaningful and be able to perform its functions effectively so as to live up to the expectations of the world community. As for the future, the issues of expansion and efficiency need to be seen together and be revisited in the light of the careful assessment of the impact of the previous extension on the efficiency of the Conference. In any event, transparency in the decision-making process on this issue is an absolute necessity. Furthermore, any future proposal for expansion must be fitted within the general policy of expansion as opposed to a piecemeal approach.

THE PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and the words addressed to the Chair. This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? If not, I should like to share with you a number of thoughts before adjourning this meeting, as we come very close to the end of Argentina's term as President of the Conference on Disarmament.

During these eight weeks, four weeks of meetings and four making up an inter-sessional period, I and my delegation held meetings and consultations with a view to securing agreement on the programme of work and on the proposal for expansion of the Conference. Informally, we considered with various players within the Conference alternative ways of finding solutions to the problems which we faced. We expressed our views and we listened to their ideas, in an atmosphere where the greatest understanding and goodwill in the search for common values always prevailed. We did not confine ourselves to what could be done here in Geneva, and we mobilized some of our representatives in various capitals to convey to the Governments concerned the ideas and the requirements, not simply of the President but of the Conference itself. At the conclusion of these weeks we have a clear view of where we stand with respect to the programme of work.

At the same time the Conference was able to resolve the question of admitting the five new members identified in the report of the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Erwin Hofer, of Switzerland. With respect to the expansion of the Conference, I would once again like to welcome the five delegations that are joining in our common efforts - Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia. I would also like to thank Ambassador Hofer for the good job of work he performed and Ambassador Grey, of the United States, for presenting the draft which made the adoption of that decision possible. In particular, my thanks go to those delegations which were able to overcome the difficulties they had on this question, and which, in a gesture which was very much appreciated by the Chair, made it possible to arrive at the necessary consensus. Despite the fact that we have taken a step forward, however, we should not forget that the decision which we have adopted specifically permitted the admission of five new members, without prejudice to the consideration of earlier, current and future requests. The Conference still has before it for consideration requests by 21 other countries. Of those 21 requests, the request of longest standing was submitted almost 15 years ago, and the most recent four months ago. As rule 2 of its rules of procedure provides, and as recalled by many delegations this morning, the Conference must consider its membership at regular intervals. I consider that this issue should be one of the elements of the future programme of work.

If I may I would now like to make a number of comments concerning the substance of our activities in the Conference. In our view, the outline of a future programme of work should include the following:

The re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate, on the basis of the report by the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile

(The President)

material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. The need to reappoint this negotiating committee was noted by the earlier Presidents of the Conference, Ambassador Grey of the United States and Ambassador Rodríguez Cedeño of Venezuela, in draft decisions CD/1566 and CD/1575; by the countries in the G21 in their draft CD/1570; and by the United States, France and the United Kingdom in their document CD/1586. Furthermore, it was emphasized in resolution 53/77 I of the United Nations General Assembly;

The re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The re-establishment of this Committee was likewise proposed in all the Conference documents I have just mentioned;

The reappointment of a special coordinator entrusted with the task of seeking the views of the members of the Conference on the most appropriate way of addressing questions related to anti-personnel mines, bearing in mind inter alia events taking place outside the Conference;

The reappointment of a special coordinator for the item "Transparency in armaments", in order that the views of the members of the Conference should be sought on the most appropriate means of addressing this question;

The reappointment of special coordinators to consider the agenda of the Conference, the expansion of its membership and the means of making its functioning more effective.

During the consultations I was also able to observe a growing predisposition towards the possibility of continuing the work of the Conference during the next annual session on the basis of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work which might be agreed this year. Since three weeks of the last part of the session have already gone by, only two or three more weeks at the most remain before the Conference must begin its consideration of the report it will present to the United Nations General Assembly. I have no illusions about the quantity of substantive work which can be performed this year, even were we to approve the programme of work immediately. If a consensus is reached in the weeks ahead on the programme of work, it is my impression that the programme should be accompanied by an agreement among the members of the Conference whereby the work commenced on the basis of that programme could be resumed at the start of the next session and continue throughout the year 2000. That "goodwill agreement" should be formalized in a Presidential declaration and should be implemented in full compliance with the Conference's rules of procedure.

Turning to the other two items which would make up a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, that is to say nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), at the end of my term of office both are still awaiting a decision. Although the Conference has not yet found the way to address these two questions, we can already identify the main elements which would enable us to pursue compromises in these two areas. Allow me to

(The President)

remind you that throughout our work, and currently with respect to PAROS and nuclear disarmament in particular, the will of Governments is fundamental. Without the necessary political will, the Conference will not be able to continue to advance towards the attainment of its noble objectives and this situation, which I would not want to describe as a crisis, but rather as a circumstantial impasse, is no help to any of the countries which go to make up this Conference and I am sure it will be no help to the work of the Conference itself either. In both respects I consider that the proposals informally presented by the previous President of the Conference, Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri, of Algeria, and the comments which have been made on them, afford an excellent basis to enable my successor, Ambassador Leslie Luck, of Australia, to continue the search for solutions in a spirit of compromise. I think that we should continue to do our utmost so that at the start of the meetings in the year 2000 the Conference can build on the basis of what has been agreed this year.

I would like to convey to Ambassador Luck my hope that progress can be made during his term of office, and to assure him that he may count upon the support of the Argentine delegation in all his activities. Allow me also to express my thanks to the coordinators of the regional groups, Ambassador Kunadi of the G21, Ambassador Siebert of the Western Group, Mr. Mikhnevich of the Eastern European Group and Ambassador Li of China. All of you gave me your support and your good wishes for making as much headway as was possible during my term. I must also thank the Secretary-General, Vladimir Petrovsky, and the Deputy Secretary-General, Abdelkader Bensmail, for all the support they have provided; and all the members of the secretariat and the interpreters, whose very efficient work makes an important contribution to our activities. And finally, my thanks to all of you, esteemed colleagues, for your patience, your understanding and your cooperation.

This concludes our work for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 19 August 1999 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.